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Gazette opinion: Big party call tests emergency responders

No one really knows how good an emergency plan is until something awful occurs to test it.

From reports of emergency personnel and several people who survived an incident of carbon monoxide poisoning at Rock Creek Resort near Red Lodge Saturday, it sounds like Carbon County emergency plans worked well.

In addition, military personnel with medical training who were among the party guests helped save the group of 200 people from further harm by deducing that the air was poisonous and evacuating the building.

The Red Lodge Rural Fire Department was among 10 agencies from as far away as Joliet, Billings, Cody, and Powell, Wyo. that responded. Beartooth Hospital called in all available staff, rounded up oxygen needed for treatment and referred the most seriously ill patients to Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare.

It's a big accomplishment in a small town to triage, transport and treat 42 patients in one night. Volunteers and professionals teamed up to take care of a large-scale emergency. Their community should be proud of their work.

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